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Sweden

Biotechnology

LL 601 Rice Found in U.S. Shipment

2007

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Report Highlights:

Swedish authorities have found the unauthorized genetically modified LL Rice 601 in a shipment of 600 tons of pre-packed U.S. long-grain rice. The rice was imported in January 2007, after the EU certification and testing requirements were imposed on U.S. rice in September 2006. Small quantities of the rice containing LL 601 had reached the retail stores before the official testing. The rice has been recalled from the stores.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Stockholm [SW1]
[SW]

LL 601 Rice Found in Sweden

On February 8, 2007, the Swedish National Food Administration (NFA) announced that traces of the unauthorized LL 601 rice had been found in long-grain rice imported from the United States. The rice, about 600 metric tons of pre-packed long-grain rice intended for end consumers and HRI, was shipped from the United States in 30 containers about seven weeks ago. It arrived in Gothenburg in western Sweden near the end of January.

According to EU requirements, local authorities in Gothenburg tested all 30 containers for LL 601 rice. Initial test results showed presence of LL 601 rice in 6 out of the first sixteen containers tested. Results from the remaining tests are expected in a few days. The rice found free of LL 601 rice will be released for sale while a sales ban has been imposed on all other rice in the shipment.

Swedish authorities conducted these tests despite the fact that the rice had been tested negative for LL 601 twice before the official testing in Sweden. It had been tested in the United States in order to get the required certificate for rice exports to the EU. The rice had also been tested negative for LL 601 by the Swedish importer ICA. ICA's tests cannot, however, detect traces of LL 601 below 0.1 percent. ICA is a leading retailer, as well as food importer, in Sweden.

Rice Being Recalled from ICA Stores

Although ICA had blocked this rice for sale awaiting the official testing, small quantities of the rice had already reached the retail stores. The rice has been recalled and ICA has offered customers to return already purchased rice. It states that the rice was recalled because it is not legal in the EU and that there is no health risk involved in consuming this rice. ICA is currently investigating why this "blocked" rice reached the retail stores.

Swedish Importer Reluctant to Continue Rice Imports from the United States

ICA is one of few importers in the EU that is still taking in U.S. rice after the EU certification and testing requirements were imposed on U.S. rice in September 2006. After these findings, however, it is doubtful if it will be able to continue its imports of U.S. rice.